



# Gregory P. Kurtz

Mayor

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**TO:** *Council Members  
City Directors*

**FROM:** *Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz*

**DATE:** *May 8, 2020*

**RE:** *Administrative Update*

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## **MY WEEK IN REVIEW:**

As many of you know we are recognizing two special groups of people this month, our older Americans and our nurses and caregivers. Our older Americans have contributed so much to our community and our country for many decades. To honor these seniors, our Community Services Department is encouraging both children and adults to become an “Intergenerational Pen Pal” and consider writing a card or a letter to a senior citizen. Cards/letters can be bought or handmade and written to specific residents or can be generic in nature. Please place your card in an unsealed stamped envelope and drop it into the mailbox located outside the Civic Center. Community Services will mail the letters to our Senior Citizens to start the Pen Pal connections. Making a connection and brightening someone’s day with a letter or card has never been so important.

On behalf of the residents of Independence, I want to express our ***deepest appreciation*** to our nurses and caregivers for all that you have done throughout these weeks of the COVID health crisis. Your career has required you to be on the front lines each and every day. We commend you for your courage and your dedication to your patients! May you remain safe while knowing ***you are*** showing us all how to truly make a difference in this world!

I had the pleasure of administering the



Administrative Update  
May 8, 2020

Oath of Office to the newest addition to our Fire Department on Tuesday of this week. Christopher Hampton was sworn in (at a social distance) as a full-time firefighter paramedic as his loved ones and members of the Fire Department team looked on. Congratulations again, Chris, and welcome to a top-notch department. May you have a long and successful career in the City of Independence.



In addition, our new Communications Director started this week. Alla Lora comes to us with extensive experience in media and communications, both in northeast Ohio and most recently in the Washington DC area. Alla is happy to be returning home to her family in Ohio and we are excited to have her as part of our team.

Alla's responsibilities will include developing and carrying out the City's internal and external communications strategies and marketing initiatives. She brings expertise in writing, editing, publishing, social media and communicating with a variety of audiences. This is especially important now that we, as a City and as a Team, are navigating our way to a new normal. Alla's expertise in communications will serve to help us provide the most up-to-date information to residents and employees, and assist us with our plans and vision as we head into the future. Alla's office will be at City Hall next to the Court office.

Any Councilmember who may be visiting City Hall, please stop by to introduce yourself and welcome Alla to Independence.

I participated in a number of local, regional and national calls this week regarding the evolution of the COVID 19 health situation.

A few main points derived from these calls drive home the point that from here on out there will be new protocols put into place at hospitals for the safety of both their employees and for the safety of their patients. Unfortunately, people are still not going to emergency rooms for the care they need which has resulted in worse outcomes for many people. Doctors at the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals expressed that they need to get people back in to get the treatment they need prior to more damage being done. Lastly...nurses have risen to a new status level, and rightfully so.

Administrative Update  
May 8, 2020

At Governor DeWine's press conference Thursday, Lt. Governor Jon Husted informed the public that as of Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, most retail will be opening. That means approximately 89% of our economy will be opened up. Once personal care businesses and restaurants are open 92.5% of the economy will be back in business. Restaurants and bars will be permitted to reopen beginning May 15<sup>th</sup> for outdoor dining followed by dine-in service which will take place on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

However, businesses must embrace the necessity for stronger safety measures and health requirements in order to rebuild consumer confidence. These measures will be strictly enforced and violators will be held accountable.

But the bottom line remains that "we" need to stay disciplined and by all means, remain vigilant keeping with the guidelines and recommendations of our medical professionals to protect each other!

#### ***PLANNING COMMISSION:***

This past Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, we held the May Planning Commission meeting in virtual format.

The six items on the agenda and results are as follows:

- 5051 West Creek Road - application for the approval for the continuation of the use of 8 rooms for the Cleveland Clinic Sleep Labs was **Approved** and will be sent for Council approval and placed on the May Council Agenda.
- 6599 Granger Road – requesting a Special U-3 Permit for the operation of a church ministry on the site was **Tabled**.
- 6001 West Creek Road – requesting a Special U-3 Permit to operate a daycare center and pre-school on the site was **Tabled**.
- 7007 East Pleasant Valley Road, Redwood Corporate One, LLC – requesting approval for a consolidation plat was **Approved**.
- Daisy Boulevard and Aster Drive, PPN 562-18-001 and 562-18-047, Daisy May, LLC; and Daisy Boulevard and Aster Drive, PPN 562-18-001, 562-18-046 and 562-18-047, Daisy May LLC requesting lot splits and consolidation were set for a **Public Hearing June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 at 6:00 pm**. This is modified from the Quarry Lee residential subdivision that was approved on January 7, 2019.

#### ***FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING:***

A Finance Committee Meeting was also held on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm prior to the Planning Commission. An Amendment to the Annual Appropriation Ordinance was brought to the table as well as an initial discussion of the 2021 Tax Budget. **Thank you** to Chairman of the

Finance Committee, Dave Grendel and to Finance Director Vern Blaze for providing the opportunity to discuss the impact that the economic shutdown will have on our City's revenue and how this will affect our current and future budgets. A number of other topics were raised and discussed that will continue at a subsequent meeting of Council.

***UPCOMING VIRTUAL MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES:***

- The **May Council Meeting** scheduled for **Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>** will once again be held in the virtual format and will begin with **Caucus at 5:30 pm** followed by the regular **Council Meeting at 7:00 pm**. Look for information on how to join the meeting on the City's website in the coming week.
- A Council **Strategic Planning Meeting** has been scheduled for **Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm**. This meeting will be held in the virtual format so please look for information on how to join the meeting on the City's website.

***HOMEGROWN HEROES:***

As mentioned in my last Administrative Update, we have many residents and prior residents who grew up in Independence that are out there on the front lines as nurses and doctors. In addition to Jacob Kingzett who I mentioned in last week's Update, I have since been made aware of two additional nurses that are from Independence, Julie Davenport and Anne Manley who are out there fighting every day against this virus....

Julie is the daughter of Kathy Davenport and is a traveling nurse. Julie wanted to help out so she took an assignment at Mt. Sinai in New York City where she is treating COVID 19 patients. Her friend Anne Manley (daughter of Joan Weir and granddaughter of Rita Kotabish) is an ICU nurse in Virginia where her unit was converted to a COVID 19 unit. Both of these young women are shining examples of service and sacrifice.

We are extremely *grateful* for what you are doing and *proud* of you both!

If you know of someone who grew up in Independence that has been working in the medical field throughout this health crisis, please send me an email or call my office. I want to continue to recognize the efforts of these men and women.

***SENIOR LUNCHESES:***

Our Civic Center staff misses seeing our seniors so they are starting drive up, pick-up lunches at the Civic Center on the following Fridays:

**Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>** – Deadline to register is Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>

**Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>; Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>; Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup> and Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>**

Administrative Update  
May 8, 2020

For more information and to register, please call the Community Services Department at 216.524.7373.

***SWIFTREACH MESSAGES:***

Every Friday at 7:00 pm I am sending out a SwiftReach message to our residents to keep you informed. The most recent message can be viewed on the City's website. If you or anyone you know has not been receiving these messages, please call the Community Services Department at 216.524.7373 to register.

***CONSTRUCTION UPDATE:***

**UPPER BROOKSIDE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS – PHASE 1:**

Work completed in the last several weeks:

- Concrete pavement placement was completed in the southbound/westbound lane of roadway this past week.

Work planned for the weeks ahead:

- Beginning this Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, the traffic zone will be flipped, and motorists will now drive on the new concrete pavement.
- All residents' driveways will be ramped in to maintain access.
- Beginning Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, pavement removal of the northbound/eastbound lane will take place.

